

June 30, 1862

John Allen

Reportedly, John Allen was not this soldier's real name. The military card filed for this soldier reports "True name Philip J. Ledder," with West Newton shown as the village of residence. No information about Philip Ledder has surfaced. This is not surprising because that was not his real name either. Our soldier's name was Phillip James Ledden. Military records for 'John Allen' show that he enlisted on May 23, 1861 as a Private in the Mass. 1st Regiment, Company G. He was killed in action about a year later on June 30, 1862 at Nelson's Farm in Glendale, VA.

Phillip Ledden was born in Chatham, New Brunswick, Canada in about 1841, and continued to live there until he was at least ten years old. He was a 20 year-old carpenter when he enlisted under the name John Allen, perhaps because he was not a U.S. citizen.

Phillip served in the Mass. 1st Infantry with five other men who enlisted in Newton and whose names are listed alongside his on the Newton Monument: Matthew T.H. Roffe; William E. Parker; Leroy S. Bridgman; William N. Freeman; and William Rogers Benson. The Mass. 1st fought in Manassas, Va., July 16-21; occupied the Fairfax Court House July 17; fought in the Battle of [Bull Run](#) on July 21; participated in the siege of [Yorktown](#) from April 16-May 4; fought in the Battle of [Williamsburg](#) on May 5; and [Seven Pines](#) from May 31-June 1. This battle was the first of seven, appropriately known as the Seven Days Battles, during which Lee attempted to force McClellan away from Richmond. The battle on the sixth day (known variously as the Battle of Glendale, or Battle of Frayser's Farm, Frazier's Farm, Nelson's Farm, Charles City Crossroads, New Market Road, or Riddell's Shop) took place on June 30, 1862 and was the one in which Ledden lost his life.

Last month, city staff was contacted by Phillip Ledden's second cousin, three times removed, who provided more family information about Phillip. She was at a loss to explain why Phillip left Canada to join the war effort from Newton. Phillip's descendants were found in Chatham, New Brunswick until about the 1880s, where the Ledden family first settled in 1780 from England or Scotland before William Ledden, Phillip's ancestor, joined the British Royal Navy in the American Revolution. Many Leddens can now be found in the northern United States, including Wisconsin